

## **Remarks by Anita Nayar, Director, Regions Refocus**

### **At the CSW 60 Multi-stakeholder Forum**

#### **Panel I: Institutional arrangements for gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

**On 21 January 2016**

Am grateful to UN Women for inviting me to address this multi-stakeholder forum and for galvanizing such high level representation of governments from all eight regions of the world. I also appreciate how UN Women has framed the questions for this first panel to explore how we can align the 2030 agenda with the full implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. I appreciate this because I feel like I've come full circle after spending a chunk of my 20's coordinating the international women's caucus, which was 5000 strong in the Beijing conference, to win the groundbreaking Platform for Action; To part of my 30's challenging the Millennium Development Goals, which did not have the support of women's movements because they reduced and in many ways eclipsed implementation of the Beijing agreements; And now in my 40's I believe we have an opportunity to work with policy makers to reclaim the most progressive aspirations of the Beijing agenda and translate this into what I call feminist policy making.

In 2016 governments have finally recognized the climate crisis and the financial crisis and how both have created massive inequalities. The problem is where the solution is located. We need feminist policies that are grounded in regional realities and that do not pit gender justice against economic and climate justice. The Beijing or 2030 Agenda isn't likely to be achieved without aligning fiscal, monetary or trade policies with the goal of women's equality and equity. We need to look to progressive agreements from Beijing that call for full and equal participation of women in rethinking, reformulating and monitoring macro-economic and social policies and strategies for the eradication of poverty.

So how do we translate these powerful agreements into action? How can we reconcile them with the realities of the global economy and the asymmetries in power? How can we ensure that autonomous women's movements can shift the power dynamics that are weighted towards large transnational corporations, especially with the current emphasis on private finance in SDG implementation?

I'd like to share two experiences from our work at Regions Refocus, which is an institute for progressive and feminist policy housed at the DHF that I co-founded a year and a half ago. The first experience is from the Caribbean region on the need to create concrete mechanisms for women's organizations and other social movements to engage with policy makers and co-construct progressive domestic and regional development plans.

Over the next three years we are planning several national public hearings to democratize the debate around development choices and how they are financed. These public hearings will lead to a regional exchange with policy makers to influence the economic development choices of key regional bodies including the Caribbean Development Bank. Our intention is

to co-construct sustainable mechanisms that advance heterodox and feminist policies while holding accountable both public and private finance.

The second experience is from the Pacific on the need to boost the capacity of national gender machineries to influence climate and sustainable development policies. This capacity is also critical to create coherence between macroeconomic policy and gender equality goals.

In 2014 we gathered national women's machineries from 12 Pacific countries along with a cross section of Ministries of Home Affairs, Internal Affairs, Environment, Climate Change, Youth, and Social Affairs to engage in collective policy work. Together, civil society and national women's machineries produced a historic first joint statement on gender, climate change, and sustainable development in the Pacific region. This outcome includes progressive language on infusing gender analysis into the mainstream policy discussions on climate change mitigation and adaptation, climate finance, and disaster risk reduction. The statement also addresses structural issues of trade and corporate accountability (challenging the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement and insisting that trade agreements must not supersede national legislation or allow infringement by corporations on human rights or national policy space).

The civil society-government partnership that emerged from this gathering has already influenced the Pacific Island Development Forum to reflect progressive positions on women's rights and civil society participation. Next steps are to identify feminist policies and government representatives who can champion these policy proposals across ministries.

Both the Pacific and Caribbean examples of co-constructing progressive policies through equitable modes of engagement between civil society and governments provide a counter to the prevailing model of "partnerships" primarily between private sector, often large corporations, and governments.

Over the past 20 years I've gone through my learning curve, seen what has been tried and never been tried. It's encouraging in 2016 to find policy makers in every region who are now able to listen and implement what has become dead clear – if we are to achieve the Beijing and 2030 agenda, we must reorient macroeconomic policies to address inequalities and deprivation, we must regulate transnational corporations, we must reclaim not only national but regional development institutions to rebuild regional solidarities for gender and economic justice, and we must sustain strong women's movements to co-construct progressive and feminist policies in every region.

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